

Minnesota Alternative Pathways Implementation Committee Competency Framework

Competencies are the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary to fulfill one's roles in a professional practice context. The framework below identifies competencies important for the practice of law. The framework is intended to provide guidance for the Committee's creation of alternative pathways for licensing, which may include the completion of law school coursework, supervised practice (during or after law school), and the production and review of a portfolio of work product. Some competencies important for law practice are not identified here because they will continue to be examined through other means, including the MPRE and satisfaction of the character and fitness requirements for licensing.

The numbered items are the competencies to be demonstrated in alternative pathways for licensing being developed by the Minnesota Alternative Pathways Implementation Committee. The lettered items describe aspects of each competency that may be helpful in identifying tasks and experiences for demonstrating the competency; they are not intended to be a checklist of tasks.

COMPETENCIES FOR THE PRACTICE OF LAW

- 1) The ability to conduct research in case law and statutory, constitutional, administrative, and secondary authority, including using technology and Artificial Intelligence tools appropriately and ethically.
- 2) The ability to reason and to integrate factual information with legal doctrine. This competency encompasses the following knowledge and skills:
 - a) understanding legal processes, sources of law, and the roles of judges, attorneys, juries, courts, and legislatures
 - b) interpreting and applying legal materials (case law, statutes, constitutional provisions, and administrative regulations)
 - c) identifying and analyzing relevant legal issues
 - d) identifying relevant facts
 - e) critically evaluating legal arguments
 - f) identifying informational gaps and discrepancies
 - g) making arguments based on precedent, analogy, and policy considerations
 - h) integrating concepts from multiple legal subject areas
- 3) An understanding of threshold concepts in key subjects:
 - a) dispute resolution (civil procedure, mediation, arbitration, administrative proceedings)
 - b) contract law
 - c) tort law
 - d) constitutional law
 - e) criminal law or criminal procedure
 - f) real property

- g) evidence
 - h) business associations
- 4) The ability to communicate effectively with clients, lawyers, courts, and others. This competency encompasses the following skills:
- a) communicating with organization and clarity
 - b) communicating in a manner appropriate to the circumstances
 - c) paying attention to the communications of others
 - d) drafting and editing effective and appropriate legal documents
 - e) using forms and documents appropriately and effectively
- 5) The ability to interact honestly, respectfully, and ethically in all interactions. This competency encompasses the following skills:
- a) acting with civility in interactions with colleagues, clients, judges, attorneys, juries, courts, legislatures, and staff, and other individuals encountered in a professional context
 - b) expressing disagreement thoughtfully and respectfully
 - c) communicating with diverse groups of people
 - d) demonstrating self-control
- 6) The ability to fulfill one's obligations to clients effectively and ethically. This competency encompasses the following skills:
- a) conducting client interviews
 - b) establishing and managing client relationships
 - c) identifying client goals and objectives and understanding the full context of client concerns
 - d) conducting factual investigations to obtain information related to client matters
 - e) evaluating strengths and weaknesses in client matters and identifying what is achievable based on practical, ethical, and legal constraints
 - f) developing strategies for addressing client goals
 - g) evaluating dispute resolution options
 - h) advocating effectively for client interests
 - i) planning for and conducting negotiations
- 7) The ability to use good judgment in conducting one's professional obligations. This competency encompasses the following skills:
- a) identifying and responding appropriately to conflicts of interest
 - b) being aware of one's own gaps in knowledge or expertise and knowing when to seek advice or assistance
 - c) taking responsibility for one's actions
 - d) demonstrating regard for the rights, safety, and welfare of others
 - e) exploring issues, ideas, and facts before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion

- 8) The ability to manage a law-related workload, to plan work activities, and to act diligently and reliably in fulfilling one's obligations to clients, lawyers, courts, and others. This competency encompasses the following skills:
 - a) meeting deadlines and time constraints
 - b) responding to inquiries and requests in a timely manner
 - c) prioritizing and organizing work activities
 - d) maintaining organized files
 - e) working both collaboratively and independently
 - f) completing tasks with thoroughness, accuracy, and attention to detail
 - g) responding effectively to unforeseen, ambiguous, or changing circumstances
 - h) communicating with supervisors about workload obligations

- 9) The ability to pursue self-directed learning, to stay informed about legal developments, to employ self-reflection, and to learn from feedback.

- 10) The ability to resolve ethical dilemmas appropriately and to comply with the requirements of the Rules of Professional Conduct, including ongoing requirements with respect to continuing legal education.

- 11) The ability to conduct oneself with respect for and in accordance with the law, including compliance with the requirements of applicable state, local, and federal constitutions, laws, rules and regulations, and any applicable court order.

Dated: March 24, 2025